

# **From The Editor**

## **COALITION FORCE OPERATIONS**

Stability and support operations—once known as operations other than war—will occupy our attention for some time to come, and this will demand the best effort that our technological, doctrinal, and training base can muster.

In the past, we structured and maintained our armed forces to meet a specific threat and some possible contingencies. Today, the monolithic threat once posed by the Soviet Union has given way to an array of lesser—but by no means insignificant—challenges to global stability. We must be prepared to respond to one or more of them at a time, and we must be ready to do it in concert with our allies. Tempting as it may be to go it alone, without placing our soldiers under operational control of a commander from another nation, we have neither the resources nor the will to pursue such a course of action for very long.

Coalition operations—as we saw in the Gulf War—permit allies to mass a sizeable force, display their common resolve, and amass considerable moral support, far beyond that which one nation could hope to achieve on its own. But what about letting a foreign commander direct our soldiers? This is nothing new, but—incredible as it may strike some of us—we do not have a monopoly on military expertise and tactical proficiency. Other nations' forces were out there in the backwaters of the world, facing the tough challenges long before we showed up on the scene, and we can learn from them.

When I read of a soldier refusing to serve under another flag, what I really see is a lack of confidence in his chain of command, and a mistaken belief that we're throwing him to the wolves. Nothing could be further from the truth than the latter, and we need to communicate this to our soldiers. To some extent, every major war of this century has been fought in conjunction with other nations, and our Army has emerged the better for it. This is an education issue, and a well-informed soldier will not fall prey to irrational fears.

As we set about teaching rules of engagement, crowd control, civil-military operations, and myriad other aspects of our new world missions to our soldiers, we need to include those equally important interoperability lessons that will build bridges instead of walls between our soldiers and those of other nations. During my interview this month with the Commander of Ukrainian Ground Forces, I was struck by how much the infantrymen of our two armies have in common, and by his description of how well U.S. and Ukrainian soldiers worked together when they met on their first joint exercise. There will be more such exercises, with an ever-widening circle of nations. The end result will be stronger alliances between nations sharing common goals, and less willingness on the part of potential aggressor states to go to war against a strong, unified coalition.

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